



**TITLE** A Qualitative Case Study of Hurricane Katrina and University  
Presidential Leadership

**RESEARCHER** Stanton F. McNeely III  
School of Education  
Northcentral University (Arizona)  
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**OBJECTIVE** The purpose of the qualitative case study was to assess the leadership practices of Xavier University of Louisiana (XUL) President Francis after Hurricane Katrina using Kouzes and Posner's Five Practices of Exemplary Leadership theory as the theoretical framework.

## **METHODOLOGY**

Data collection was in the form of face-to-face interviews with a purposeful sample of participants from the study population that included the XUL president and two members from each of these constituency groups: XUL Board of Trustees, faculty, staff, students, alumni, and key community leaders (N=13). The following research questions guided the study: What perceived leadership practices did the XUL president employ during and following Hurricane Katrina? To what extent were the five leadership practices used by the XUL president during and after Hurricane Katrina (2005-2010)? What were the perceived leadership characteristics displayed by the XUL president during and following Hurricane Katrina? Following data collection, the qualitative responses were analyzed using the Kouzes & Posner framework and a pattern-matching technique presented to align their constructs to the participants' responses. A majority of the participants were male (54%), Black or African-American (69%), married (46%), and had either earned either a doctoral degree (38%) or a professional degree beyond a bachelor's degree (23%).

## **KEY FINDINGS**

Model the Way (mentioned in all 13 interviews), Inspire a Shared Vision (mentioned in 11 interviews), and Challenge the Process (9 interviews) emerged as major themes for leadership practices in data analysis, along with Communication (11 interviews), and the leadership characteristics of Confidence (7 interviews) and Integrity (10 interviews). Encourage the Heart (6 interviews) and Enable Others to Act (5 interviews) and

emerged as minor themes, along with the leadership characteristics of Optimism and Faith (6 interviews each).